

THE FANTASY OF EXILE

SOME REFLECTIONS
ON THE
MARGINS
OF THE
'UNHOMELYCONSCIOUSNESS'

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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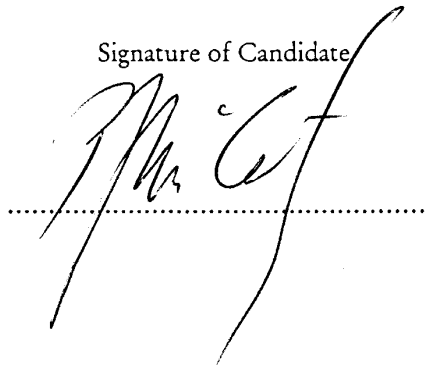
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CERTIFICATE

I certify that this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being submitted as part of candidature for any other degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me and that any help that I have received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signature of Candidate

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'M. C. F.'.

Dedicated to
my Mother
BESSIE JEAN MCCARTHY
and to
the memory of
my Father
NOEL FENTON MCCARTHY
1928-1989



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about exile, but exile of a particular nature. I take the term exile discursively and textually, with no particular regard to historical specificities it may offer. In this sense I intend to use the concrete to render the abstract, working backwards from the historically and generally recognised condition of exile—the relegated, the diasporic—to its discursive relocation in various forms of narrative, reflection and representation. In this the measure of the exile will be the continuities and discontinuities of the discourses of its location.

The thesis will argue that the exilic subject—that is, the subject of modern consciousness—is the product of a certain fantasy formation of a subjective homeland projected onto the various margins of discourse, history and geography. This fantasy leads to a fascination and identification of things perceived at the margins or the bounds of a psychopathological homeland, rendering the homeland itself the site of alienation. The thesis argues against the positioning of the subject as alienated 'lack' in favour of a subjective and representative plenitude. The thesis will look to various discourses on alienation and ideology, with a particular focus on the philosophy of reflection, phenomenology and psychoanalytic theory (the philosophy of the 'unreflected') to trace a sort of exilic affectability that inheres in the representation of the modern subject.

The introductory chapter 'Parenthesis' picks at the relation between the discourses of post-structuralist and post-colonial theory, looking to their fascination with the margins and positing a certain intellectual and political tendency to fantasy. Chapters One and Two explore the problem of representation in these discourses with particular emphasis on the disposition of the subject and its relation to its own reading or metaphysical positioning, taking as its metaphor the representative relation between the map and the territory. Chapters Three and Four look to the ontogenesis of the subject of exile and its reflective and metaphysical positioning in representation. Chapter Five closes the thesis with an exposition on the fantasy of subjective and representative closure. The fantasy of exile as the fantasy of closure proper.